

Will Fulbright Go With Johnson on Tour of Far East?

By Rowland Evans Jr.

WASHINGTON, May 4.—Vice-President Johnson is expected to invite a one or two-man delegation from Congress to accompany him to the Far East next week, it was understood today.

No final decision has been made, but first prospect would be Sen. J. William Fulbright, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. President Kennedy invited the Arkansas Democrat to the White House to confer with him this evening, but the subject of the conversation was unannounced. The meeting was described as "routine."

Vice-President Johnson is tentatively scheduled to leave Washington about Tuesday of next week with a hard pledge of support for the South Viet Nam government of President Ngo Dinh Diem. A formal announcement of the trip is slated for tomorrow, but all indications are that the Vice-President will make the full Far Eastern tour during his planned two-week mission for President Kennedy.

Bipartisan Support

Whether Sen. Fulbright himself or some other top-rank Senator or member of the House would go along with the Vice-President was still in the "somewhat uncertain" stage.

A bi-partisan delegation of top-rank members of Congress, it was believed, would shore up the Johnson mission and enhance its prospect of success. The Vice-President's task is to assure South Viet Nam, Thailand and other countries in that part of the world that the United States will not let them down in the face of Communist aggression or subversion.

An old China hand, who has consistently held an uncompromising anti-Communist posture, is quoted today that although there will be some benefits from the Johnson diplomatic journey, "these visits to red words and not deeds. I am afraid that we desperately need more are

Committee. Rep. Judd said that the "very firm words of our President on the question of Laos six weeks ago" appear not to have been followed by "a strong and firm position there that would give the words real substance."

"I am not being critical," Rep. Judd said in an interview. "What I say now about President Kennedy I would say about former President Eisenhower. I am afraid it will take a lot more than these visits to re-establish confidence in the United States in Asia."

May Go Around World

The Vice-President and his party tentatively plan to pay official calls at Saigon, the capital of South Viet Nam, Manila, Taipei, Hong Kong and Bangkok, with other possibilities still being considered. The trip home probably will take him to Rome for several hours so that, on arrival back here expected two weeks after departure, he will have gone around the world.

The timing of the Johnson mission was seen here as fortuitous. It is hoped that the Vice-President's presence in an area that has gone badly for the West for many months, and very badly for the past six weeks, now would be taken as evidence of a refusal to back away any further. Mr. Johnson got high marks for his first diplomatic excursion for the President. He went to Africa and took with him Sen. Thomas Kuchel, Calif., the Republican whip in the Senate, and Rep. John J. Rooney, D., N. Y., the king-pin in the House on spending budgets for various United States agencies abroad.

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